1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37



Only once did we find a Kol shrine with a roof. Usually shrines are just raised platforms of earth about the base of a tree, preferably a *nim* tree. The older and larger the tree the better. 778

*Concomitants of Worship.* The following items are usually found as component parts of the central village shrines.

1. *Flags* (*Jhanda*). Flags are an essential part of the village shrine. They are usually set up on bamboo poles which are in turn bound to the trunk of the *nim* tree. It is also not infrequent that these are placed high above in the tops of the tree where the flag waves over all. The flag makes it known, they say, that the deity is present, and the colours and colour combinations usually indicate which deities are likely to be found there. The flags also serve as an attraction to the godlings who may come and perch upon them. They also frighten away evil spirits. The bamboo pole is usually about fifteen feet long and may have from one to seven flags attached to it. The village pays for the purchase of these flags unless there is someone who wishes to gain merit by giving them to the shrine. The Kol *panda* who is in charge of the shrine and its properties, puts the flags on the pole and sets it in place. The flags themselves are from 18 to 24 inches in length and about six inches wide at the widest part. 778 202

In addition to these larger flags on the bamboo pole, there are always found smaller flags at the base of the tree or at the spot where the blood of the sacrifice is sprinkled. They are quite small and are brought by individuals or families who place them in position when the offering is made. These flags are usually red. When one seeks a boon from the goddess and makes a promise to give a sacrifice if the boon is granted, he should set up a red flag as a witness to his promise. A flag is set up by those going on a journey as a witness to the fact that they will make an offering when they return safely.

In general red is the favourite colour of the *devis*. There are some colours which are characteristic of certain *devis*. Kali likes black; Asmani likes white or red; Khermai is sometimes given green, though red is more common; yellow is for Sannyasi. This set-up lacks consistency, like much among the Kols, for some deny any particular significance and say that the flags are merely decorative. While the smaller flags may be set up at any time, it is usual that the larger flags are set up only once or maybe twice a year, *Chaita* and *Kunwar*, spring and fall, being the accepted times for new flags. [776 822] [184]

2. *Iron Tridents* (*Trisul*). These are found in varying sizes and numbers. There should be at least one long one with a very sharp point, see figure 25, and there are usually more. Smaller ones 778 411

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37



778 411 [785 787] are very common. The trident with the sharp point is used at the time the *panda* or another is possessed of Khermai, and is pierced through the tongue or cheek.

778 787 292 3. *Spiked Sandals* (*Kharau*). Every well-equipped shrine should have at least one pair of spiked sandals. These are made of pieces of wood in the shape of the sole of a shoe with sharp spikes driven through so that the person walking on them stands on the points. There is a wooden peg toward the front of each which fits between the big toe and the next and holds the sandal on the foot. These are generally used at the time of the trance. When the spirit of Kalimai possesses a man, it will be evidenced by his desire to put on these sandals and jump about in them.

778 785 787 [412] 4. *Iron Tongs* (*Chimta*). There is also another kind of iron instrument found in these shrines: iron tongs used for taking coals out of the fire. When Sannyasi *deo* comes upon a man he will take the tongs and beat himself with them. Hindu ascetics usually carry tongs.

5. *Iron Lash* (*Gurda*). This is a sort of magic chain made of iron links barbed with bits of steel. The handle by which it is grasped is also iron. During the *bawa*, if one is possessed (particularly by Bhuiyan *deo*), he will pick up this chain and lash himself till the blood comes. If some person, possessed of an evil spirit, is brought before the shrine, and the *panda* in his trance recognizes the reality of the spirit possession, he will attempt to cast out the spirit by lashing the unfortunate man.

6. *Iron Nails*. Some bits of iron or iron nails are usually found somewhere about the shrine. These serve a dual purpose: they are tests for Khermai, and one possessed of her can stick them into his flesh without pain or discomfort. They are also used to frighten away evil spirits who may make a disturbance, and are sometimes flung in their direction causing them to fly away.

7. *A Bed of Spikes* (*Palna*). Often a bed of spikes is found in connection with these shrines. This too is to test spirit possession. 778 One possessed of Kali will seek to use the bed of spikes.

[777 237] 8. *A Ram's Horn* is sometimes found. It is lucky to have one and it protects the shrine.

[354] 9. *Clay Lamps* (*Dip*). Clay dishes into which oil is poured and wicks attached are also found at all shrines. Sweet oil and incense are mixed, and during the time of worship two or three of these are lighted and kept burning. The *panda* lights and cares for them.

[789] 10. *Ashes* (*Rakha*). A pile of ashes is always found somewhere about the shrine. This is a good protective device against evil spirits.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37



cut in this forest and carried to Jubbulpore where it is sold to customers among the military folks living on the Ridge. In this way three to four annas per trip are earned. The Kol who takes wood from the reserved forest must pay two pice for each load carried on his head out of the forest.

The cutting of grass during the rainy season is another source of income for this village and a good load of grass, such as may be carried on the head, will bring from three to four annas in Jubbulpore. Gardening would be possible along the banks of the river but they do not do any there. What gardening they do is limited to the manure pile where pumpkins and the like are allowed to grow. There is an occasional hunt with dogs and torches, mainly for hares which stand and watch the light and are either clubbed to death or caught by the dogs. There were no guns in the village, nor did they use the bow and arrow. Although they live right beside the river fishing is not common. Sometimes fish are cornered in shallow water and caught with strips of cloth.

In our visits to Kol villages we also went to numerous bazaars. The bazaar is usually a weekly feature and there is a definite rotation from village to village. In all our inspections we did not find anything for sale in the weekly bazaars which had been brought there by Kols. Any wood, grass, eggs or the like, which they do sell are sold privately to individuals.

*Animals.* Whenever possible Kols keep animals such as cows, bullocks, goats and chickens, but unless they are rather independent economically not many are found to own cattle. Out of twelve Kol families studied in Barela only four owned cattle: five bullocks, two cows and two calves. Most of the families had a few chickens. Dogs and cats are found in Kol villages but they do not seem to be owned by individuals, belonging rather to the whole village. No swine were kept in Barela, nor by any other Kol community which we studied. Some intimated that in the years that were past swine were kept but that they gave it up so as not to offend their Hindu neighbours. Kols never keep donkeys nor horses. One Kol in Barela wanted to purchase a pair of bullocks, and to do this went to a bazaar in Panagar a distance of twenty miles away, where he got one for eight rupees. A few days later he purchased another from a nearby Gond village and paid twelve rupees. Neither was a very good specimen.

The survey of Kharara Ghat indicated that there they owned 35 bullocks, 73 cows, 43 goats and about 200 chickens. In our investigations we found only one or two Kol families owning buffaloes; their cost and care is far too much for the average Kol. Eight out of the thirty